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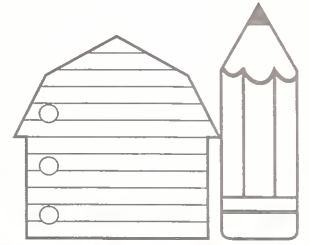
Ag in the Classroom

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Notes

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Kansas Farm Family Featured In New Social Studies Textbook

Until recently, millions of third graders' first introduction to agriculture might have come from a social studies textbook: "Nathan shivers as his feet touch the cold floor. He hurries to dress but he can still feel the wind blowing through the cracks around his upstairs window. From there he can see his father going into the old cow barn. Beyond the barn, as far as he can see, are brown plowed fields, small puddles of water, bare trees, and wooden fences. He goes downstairs, puts on his boots and an old jacket."

Fortunately, thanks to six farm families and an employee of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, a 1991 social studies textbook will feature a contemporary, accurate, and detailed look at Kansas agriculture.

During the summer of 1989, Judith Williams, a projects editor with the publishing company of Silver Burdett & Ginn contacted Loreen McMillan, marketing specialist with the Kansas Board of Agriculture. Williams asked for assistance in preparing a chapter that would help students across the country—most of whom might have little personal connection with agriculture—understand more about what happens on a farm.

Believing that "children do such a good job of communicating to their peers," McMillan asked several farm families to share their stories. Each family wrote a story in letter form about how they produce wheat. The stories are written as a

series of letters from third-grade farm children to their cousins or pen pals in the city.

For example, one Kansas child described fall and winter on the farm this way:

"I go with my dad a lot after school to check on the cattle, mend fences, and do the chores. We have to make sure that none of the cattle are sick, and if they are, we doctor them.

"When it gets colder and the snow comes, we take the cattle away from the wheat. The wheat is resting now and would be hurt if the cattle continued grazing."

McMillan says that she had originally not intended for the letters to be published. But she believes the first-person writing conveyed an immediacy that will help convey two important messages. First, children learn that farming is a year-round activity with never a moment when there isn't something to do. Even on the most wintery day, there's machinery to be repaired. Second, students learn that farming is a hands-on experience shared by the entire family.

The new textbook, *Comparing Communities*, is now in use in thousands of classrooms. McMillan says the Kansas experience is "a first in influencing textbook publishers to include more accurate information about agriculture."

The Ron Battenhoff family was one of six Kansas families who shared stories about their farming operations to a third-grade social studies textbook.



Photo: John Schlageck,
Kansas Farm Bureau

Editors's Note

Dr. Duane Acker was appointed Assistant Secretary for Science and Education for the U.S. Department of Agriculture by President George Bush on June 10, 1992. He had served as Administrator for Foreign Agricultural Service and Office of International Cooperation and Development just prior to his appointment. Before coming to the Federal government in 1989, Dr. Acker was President of Kansas State University (KSU) and prior to that, Associate Dean of Agriculture for Instruction at KSU. It was there that Dr. Acker became familiar with Ag in the Classroom and he's been an enthusiastic supporter ever since. As Assistant Secretary, Dr. Acker has leadership responsibility for all agricultural science and education programs at USDA. We welcome Dr. Acker and look forward to his support and guidance for Ag in the Classroom.

Agriculture In Montana Schools Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Montana Governor Stan Stephens presents certificates to winners of Montana's annual bumper sticker contest as he joins in celebrating AMS's 10th anniversary.

Agriculture in Montana Schools (AMS) is celebrating its tenth birthday in 1992 with a year-long celebration. The festivities kicked off with a birthday party—complete with birthday cake—in January. They continued at a March 19th Ag Day luncheon when state government officials and university staff joined to honor the contributions of the all-volunteer organization. Governor Stan Stephens and State Superintendent Nancy Keenan were among the dignitaries who honored AMS for its contributions to Montana's education.

Governor Stephens joined Betty Jo Malone in presenting savings bonds, certificates, and presentations of Montana agricultural products to eight winners in this year's bumper sticker contest. This popular student

activity continues to spread the word about the importance of agriculture throughout the state of Montana.

On Ag Day, AMS sponsored a "Munch Montana" menu in school lunch rooms across the state. It featured foods grown in Montana, with a special emphasis on wheat and barley. The lunch included a lean roast beef or lean ham sandwich on a whole wheat bun, a lettuce and tomato salad, fresh fruit, vegetable barley soup, and low-fat milk.

AMS also mailed a packet of materials pertaining to wheat and barley to schools across the state. The materials help students and teachers understand how wheat became the agricultural crop the world depends on . . . and on Montana's important role in the wheat market.

In spite of the celebration, however, the group is spending the year looking ahead . . . not backwards. "We hope our next ten years will make us ten times more effective," says AMS president and Montana state contact Marie Hovland.

For the coming year, AMS will focus on two activities: completing a video series on important agricultural products, and rewriting the resource manual for seventh and eighth grade teachers. "During the next decade, we will continue to support what we believe to be a very important part of education," Hovland says.



Nebraska Teacher Teaches Literature, Science, AND Agriculture

"For third graders, reading is much more than an assignment in a textbook and a meeting with the teacher at a reading table," said Kathy Schellpeper, a third grade teacher at Calvert Elementary School in Lincoln, Nebraska, at the AITC National Conference. "Even more important, reading doesn't just last from 9:00 to 10:00 in the morning."

Schellpeper shared her secrets for integrating reading . . . and agriculture . . . throughout the day and throughout the curriculum. For example, she combines social studies, science, and literature as she teaches students about the common Nebraska crop seeds — corn, wheat, soybeans, grain sorghum, oats, and dry edible beans. "There are others," she says, "but I teach those six because they are enough for a third grader to remember." She gives students seeds to sort and classify by texture, shape, and color. They learn what the seeds are. Then they make a seed card to take home to show their parents what they're learning.

Once they've learned about seeds, they plant their own crops. "Last year," she noted, "I had some plants that were more than three feet tall in my classroom."

Then students learn what happens to the crops after they're harvested. Each student brings in a cereal box and the class spends several periods learning about ingredients — especially those that incorporate the crops they've been learning about. Then students invent their own cereal, come up with an appropriate name, and create their own eye-catching cereal box. "The next time they're in the store, they have more of an appreciation for

... she combines social studies, science, and literature as she teaches students about the common Nebraska crop seeds ...

where that cereal came from," Schellpeper says.

A unit on embryology incorporates literature. "Chickens Aren't the Only Ones," by Ruth Keller (Scholastic Books) is a student favorite during the time when chicks are hatching in their classroom. Schellpeper also uses the video produced by Reading Rainbow to accompany the unit.

A dairy unit gives students a chance to incorporate agriculture into their math lessons. Students survey 10 people about their favorite ice cream flavor. They compile the results and transfer all that to a class graph. "Working with information they have collected is so much more fun than math out of a workbook," Schellpeper said.

There's plenty of reading in the math unit as well, including *The Milk Makers* by Gail Gibbons. According to Schellpeper, it's not unusual for her students to ask, "Why are we reading in math?" They can, however, usually answer their own question: "Oh, yeah, we read all the time."



Students in Kathy Schellpeper's classroom measure the progress of their Nebraska products in an innovative approach that combines math and agriculture.

Teaching Materials Feature Pilgrims

Each year in classrooms across the country, teachers strive to come up with a new and creative way to teach students about the Pilgrims. Exciting curriculum materials developed by the National Livestock & Meat Board will make that task easier.

"Coming to America" is designed to be used in the fifth grade social studies curriculum. It helps students learn more about the difficulties and hardships the Pilgrims endured during their voyage to the new world.

"Coming to America" helps students understand and appreciate the courage, resourcefulness, and determination of the Pilgrims of New Plymouth.

In particular, the materials help students understand that the Pilgrims came to America with a minimum of provisions. Only through growing and preserving foods were they able to survive in the new land.

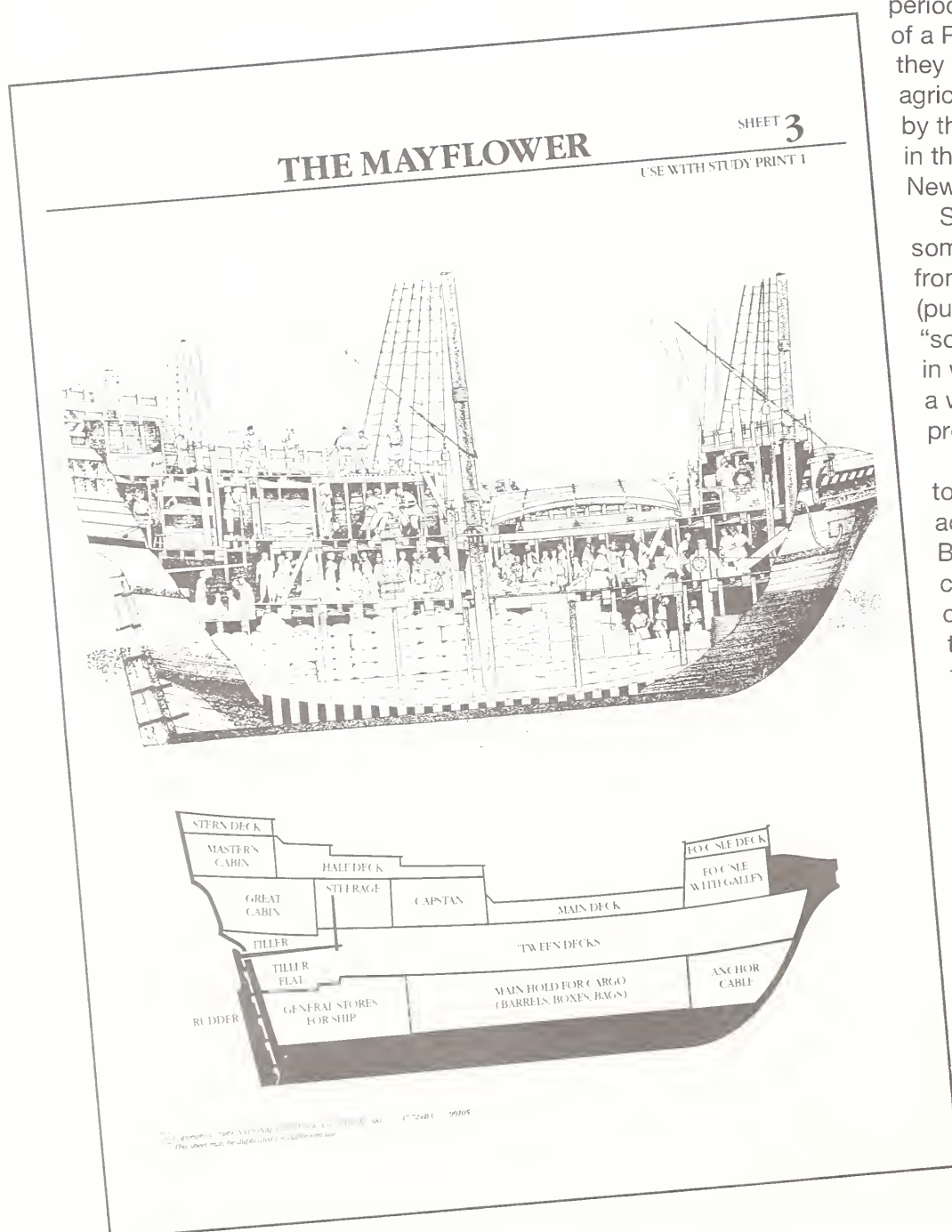
The kit includes six full-color study prints, each one teaching a different aspect of Pilgrim life: the voyage, the village of New Plymouth, farming practices, preserving foods, the harvest festival, and the daily life of children. Twelve reproducible student activity sheets enrich students' learning.

For example, as students see a print of the Mayflower, they also trace the route of the Mayflower on a map of the period. When they look at a print of a Pilgrim woman sowing corn, they learn more about the agricultural practices followed by the farmers in the first years in the settlement they called New Plymouth.

Students also learn about some favorite Pilgrim foods — from maize and pumpkins (pumpkins) to a dish called "sourced pork," which is boiled in wine and then marinated in a wine sauce as a method of preserving the meat.

The materials have proved to be the most popular activities developed by the Board. Barbara Selover, who coordinates the development of educational materials for the Board, notes that "all teachers have a unit at Thanksgiving." But, she adds, "this kit made it a lot more enriching for the kids than just turkey."

"Coming to America" is available for \$4.95 from the Education Department, National Livestock and Meat Board, 444 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611.



Agri-Fest Involves, Delights Florida Students

Each year in Polk County, Florida, thousands of fourth graders and their teachers take part in a day-long learning experience that helps them understand more about Florida agriculture. At the National Conference, organizer Ellen Bryan, a curriculum specialist for social studies, economics, and law education, shared some of the secrets to the program's success.

Agri-Fest is a a day-long, annual event held at a local fairgrounds. It introduces students to Florida's four major agricultural industries: citrus, ornamental horticulture, beef cattle, and phosphate. Two other sessions help students learn more about other agricultural industries (including forestry, bee keeping, aquaculture), and agricultural careers.

With more than 600 students a day (and nearly 6,000 each year) moving through each of six learning activities, organization is a must. "Students wear color-coded name tags," Bryan noted. Hosts, provided by local FFA chapters, move with the student groups throughout the day. Volunteers also serve as presenters in each of the sessions.

Before arriving at Agri-Fest, teachers receive a 40-page notebook of curriculum ideas Bryan has developed. All offer additional suggestions for integrating agriculture into the curriculum.

Bryan, who is a farmer as well as a curriculum development expert, believes strongly in the importance of Agri-Fest — and of the Ag

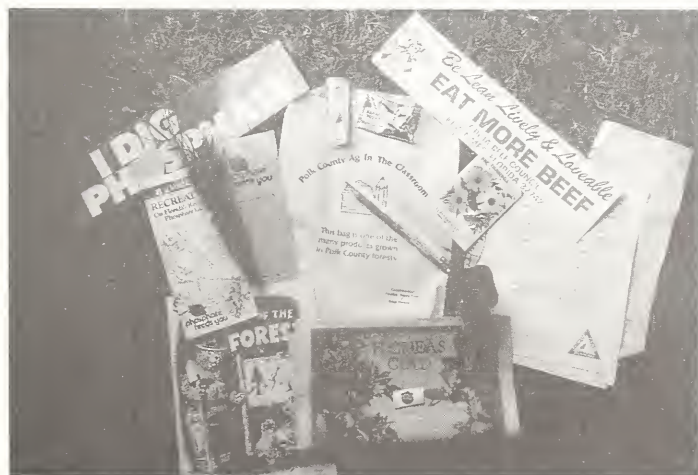


Each year, thousands of students at Agri-Fest learn about Florida's major agricultural industries.

in the Classroom program. "If we don't instill in our children an appreciation of the land, then in another generation or two, America is not going to have the abundance we now have. If our future voters don't become cognizant of things that affect agriculture, we're going to be the hungry nation instead of sending a surplus across the water."

Because Agri-Fest has proved so popular, Bryan has now begun to find ways to incorporate agriculture into the upper elementary grades. "We have found a way to get kids excited about agriculture. We can't afford to let that excitement wait until they're old enough to participate in FFA at high school."

"If we don't instill in our children an appreciation of the land, then in another generation or two, America is not going to have the abundance we now have. . ."



These Materials Will Egg Students On



Mighty Egg

Looking for an interesting science eggsperiment?

You might want to consult Albert Eggstein. If language arts is your concern, William Sheggspeare will certainly have something to say.

And noted gourmand Crepe Suzegg can share secrets on health and nutrition.

These clever characters are part of "The Incredible Journey from Hen to Home," billed as an "eggcciting" cross-curricular education unit for students in grades four,

five, and six. The teaching package has been developed by the American Egg Board.

The kit includes seven lessons, each one incorporating eggs into some area of the curriculum. The lessons teach not only basic skills in language arts, math, science, health, nutrition, and consumer education, but also enrichment skills using logic puzzles, classroom cooking, economic decision-making, and creativity. In many cases, the lessons incorporate two or more disciplines.

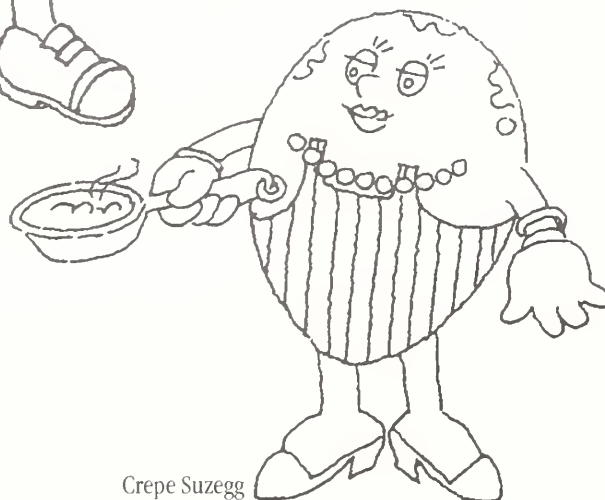
To meet teacher's scheduling needs, most of the lessons are limited to 30- or 40-minute segments. They also include additional activities that can enhance students' learning.

The kit also features a colorful poster that helps students trace the egg's journey "from hen to home." Students move game pieces as they answer basic questions about eggs.

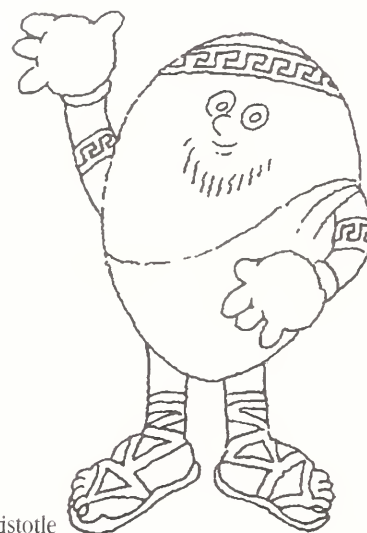
For more information, or to order, contact the American Egg Board, 1460 Renaissance Drive, Park Ridge, IL 60068 (708) 296-7043.



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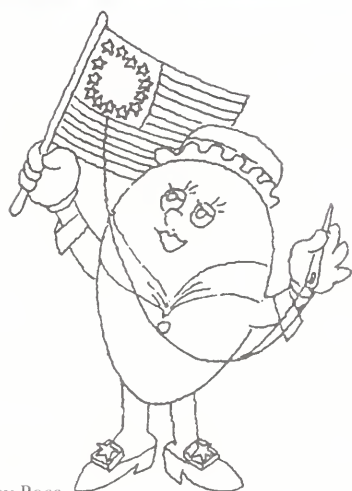


Crepe Suzegg

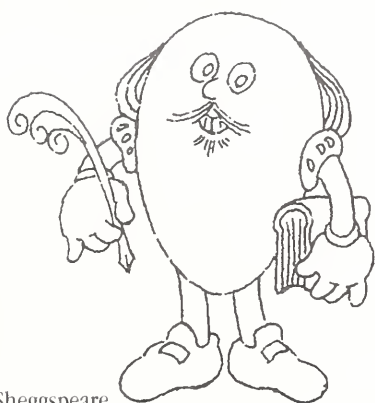


Eggistotle

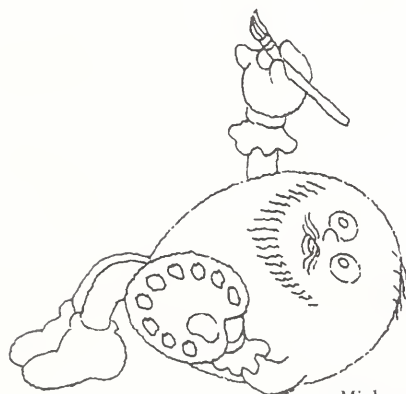
From Eggistotle to Beggsy Ross, these characters help students have fun while learning more about eggs.



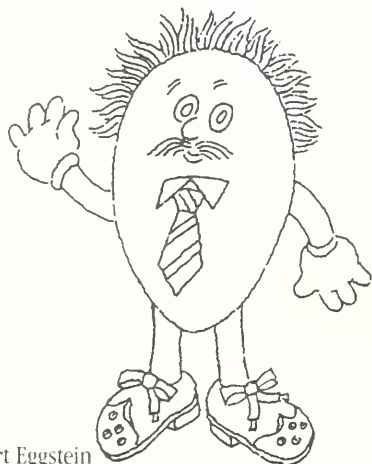
Begsy Ross



William Sheggspaire



Michaeleggelo



Albert Eggstein

Just What IS One Part Per Million?

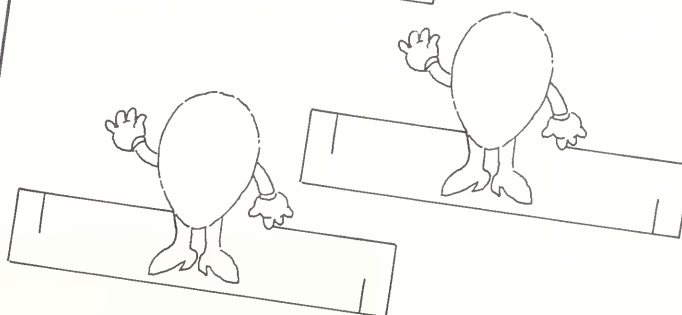
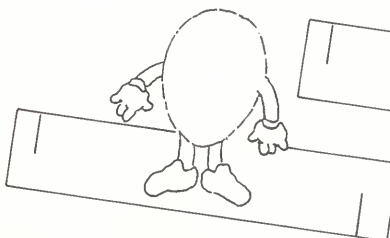
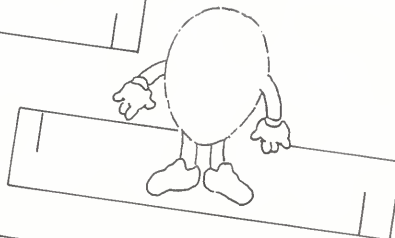
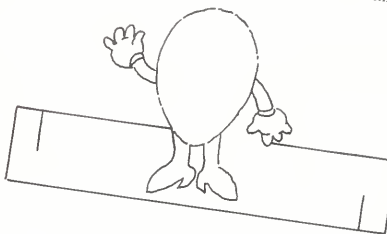
If you've read scientific studies, you've probably heard the phrase, "One part per million." But just what does that mean?

Karch and Associates, a Washington, DC, environmental consulting firm, asked the same question. Here's what they found out:

One part per million is the same as . . . one inch in 16 miles . . . one minute in two years . . . a one-gram needle in a ton of hay . . . one penny in \$10,000 . . . one large mouthful of food in comparison with how much a person consumes in a lifetime.

GAME PIECES

Draw your own egg characters, and create names for them.



The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

Alabama

Ms. Jane Alice Lee
2101 Bell Road
Montgomery, AL 36117
205-272-2611

Ms. Brenda Summerlin
Dept of Ag & Industries
PO Box 3336
Montgomery, AL 36193
205-242-5872

Alaska

Mr. Ted Berry
Mat-Su College
University of Alaska
PO Box 2889
Palmer, AK 99645
907-745-9752

Arizona

Ms. Sue Cafferty
4341 E Broadway
Phoenix, AZ 85040
602-255-4456

Mr. Robert Wilson
Arizona Farm Bureau Federation
3401 E Elwood
Phoenix, AZ 85040
612-470-0088

Arkansas

Dr. Philip Besonen
GE 310
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
501-575-4270

California

Mr. Mark Linder
CA Foundation for AITC
1601 Exposition Blvd FB 13
Sacramento, CA 95815
916-924-4380

Colorado

Ms. Helen Davis
Colorado Dept of Agriculture
700 Kipling St. #4000
Lakewood, CO 80215-5894
303-239-4114

Ms. Bette Blinde
28276 WCR 15
Windsor, CO 80550
303-686-7806

Connecticut

Mr. David Nisely
Dept of Agriculture
165 Capitol Ave
Room 234
Hartford, CT 06106
203-566-3671

Dr. Alfred Mannebach
University of Connecticut
249 Glenbrook Rd
Storrs, CT 06269-2093
203-486-0246

Delaware

Mr. G. Wallace Caulk, Jr.
Delaware Farm Bureau
233 S Dupont Highway
Camden-Wyoming, DE 19934
302-697-3183

Florida

Mr. John McNeely
FL Dept of Agriculture and
Consumer Services
153 Conner Bldg.
3125 Conner Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
904-488-7000

Georgia

Ms. Donna Reynolds
Georgia Farm Bureau
PO Box 7068
Macon, GA 31298
912-474-8411

Hawaii

Mr. Ken Kajihara
Dept of Education
49 Funchal St, J-306
Honolulu, HI 96813-1549
808-373-3477

Idaho

Ms. Kathie Johnson
Idaho Dept of Agriculture
PO Box U
Twin Falls, ID 83303
208-736-2188

Illinois

Ms. Ellen Culver
Illinois Farm Bureau
Field Services Division
1701 Towanda Ave
Bloomington, IL 61702-2901
309-557-2219

Indiana

Mr. Robert Book
IN Institute of Agric,
Food, & Nutrition
101 W Washington St #1320E
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-637-1600

Iowa

Ms. Fredi Jun
IA Foundation for Ag Awareness
PO Box 364
Indianola, IA 50125
515-961-2548

Kansas

Ms. Sharon Tally
124 Bluemont Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
913-532-7946

Mr. Tim Christian
SCS 760 S. Broadway
Salina, KS 67401
913-823-4570

Kentucky

Ms. Faye Lowe
Kentucky Farm Bureau
9201 Bunsen Pkwy
Louisville, KY 40200-0700
502-495-5000

Louisiana

Ms. Barbara Langley
LA Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 95004
Baton Rouge, LA 70895-9004
504-922-6200

Maine

Mr. Mark James
Room 101, Winslow Hall
University of Maine
Orono, ME 04469
207-581-3206

Maryland

Ms. Laurie Green
Department of Agriculture
50 Harry S Truman Pkwy
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-841-5894

Massachusetts

Mr. Wayne Hipsley
211 Stockbridge Hall
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003
413-545-2646

Michigan

Dr. Eddie Moore
410 Agriculture Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
517-355-6580

Ms. Julie Chamberlain
Michigan Farm Bureau
7373 W Saginaw Hwy
Lansing, MI 48909
517-323-7000

Minnesota

Mr. Alan Withers
MN Department of Agriculture
90 W Plato Blvd
St Paul, MN 55107
612-296-6688

Mississippi

Ms. Helen Jenkins
MS Farm Bureau
PO Box 1972
Jackson, MS 39205-1972
(Street: 6310 I-55 N
Jackson, MS 39211)
601-957-3200

Missouri

Ms. Diane Olson
Missouri Farm Bureau
PO Box 658
Jefferson City, MO 65102
314-893-1400

Montana

Ms. Marie Hovland
289 Airport Bench Road
Great Falls, MT 59404
406-727-5045

Nebraska

Ms. Ellen Hellerich
NE Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 80299
Lincoln, NE 68501
402-421-4400 ext 2002

Nevada

Nevada AITC Task Force
1300 Manetta Way
Sparks, NV 89431
702-853-5696

New Hampshire

Ms. Lynn Blye
Dept. of Ag.
Granite State Dairy Production
Caller Box 2042
Concord, NH 03302
603-271-3696

New Jersey

Ms. Maryann Hutson
NJ Dept of Agriculture
CN 330
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-8897 or 633-7463

New Mexico

Mr. E.G. Blanton
NM Farm & Livestock Bureau
421 N Water
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505-526-5521

New York

Ms. Betty Wolanik
111 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-5901
607-255-8122

North Carolina

Ms. Janice Shepard
NC Farm Bureau
PO Box 27766
Raleigh, NC 27611
919-782-1705

North Dakota

Ms. Sarah Reinhillier
ND Dept of Ag
600 E. Boulevard Ave. -6th Floor
Bismarck, ND 58501-0020
701-224-4567

Ohio

Ohio Ag Awareness Council
PO Box 479
Columbus, OH 43216-0479
614-249-2473

Oklahoma

Ms. JoDahl Theimer
OK Department of Agriculture
2800 N Lincoln Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-521-3868

Dr. James Rutledge
205 Poultry Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater OK 74078
405-744-5390
FAX 405-744-5339

Oregon

Ms. Kay Shidler
Agri-Business Council
1200 NW Front Ave., Suite 290
Portland, OR 97209-2800
503-221-8756

Pennsylvania

Ms. Beth Moore
5399 Guiter Rd.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-375-2639

Rhode Island

Ms. Carol Stamp
1 Stamp Place
South County Trail
Exeter, RI 02822
401-942-4742

South Carolina

Mr. Hugh McClimon
922 Rutledge Bldg.
SC Dept of Education
Columbia, SC 29201
803-734-8426

South Dakota

Ms. Gail Brock
SD Farm Bureau
PO Box 1426
Huron, SD 57390
605-352-6731

Ms. Carol McFarland-McKee

Executive Director, AITC
PO Box 577
Pierre, SD 57501
605-224-0361

Tennessee

Mr. Bobby Beets
Tennessee Farm Bureau
Box 313
Columbia, TN 38402-0313
615-388-7872

Texas

Mr. Tad Duncan
Texas Farm Bureau
PO Box 2689
Waco, TX 76702-2689
817-772-3030

Utah

Mr. El Shaffer
UT Department of Agriculture
350 N Redwood Rd
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
801-538-7104

Vermont

Dr. Gerald Fuller
University of Vermont
Agric. Engineering Bldg
Burlington, VT 05405-0004
802-656-0039

Ms. Megan Camp
Shelburne Farms
Shelburne, VT 05482
802-985-8686

Virginia

Ms. Jane Futch
VA Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 27552
Richmond, VA 23261
804-225-7544

Washington

Ms. Jill Harder
WA Dept of Agriculture
P.O. Box 3924
Lacey, WA 98503
206-586-1427

West Virginia

Mr. William Aiken
WV Farm Bureau
Rt 3, Box 156-A
Buckhannon, WV 26201
304-472-2080

Wisconsin

Mr. Bob Leege
Wisconsin Farm Bureau
7010 Mineral Point Rd
Madison, WI 53705
608-833-8070

Wyoming

Ms. Sue Sherman
Executive Director WAITC
WY Dept of Agriculture
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-5478

Ms. Elaine Moore

President
Wyoming Ag in the Classroom
2407 Highland Court
Douglas, WY 82633
307-358-6232

Guam

Mr. Victor Artero
College of Ag & Life Sciences
University of Guam
Mangiala, Guam 96923
617-734-2575

Micronesia

Dr. Ruben Dayrit
CTAS/College of Micronesia
Kolonia, Ponape
FSM 96941
691-320-2738

Puerto Rico

Mr. Dave Heilig
USDA/SCS
Caribbean Area State Office
GPO Box 4868
San Juan, PR 00936
809-498-5206

Virgin Islands

Mr. Eric Bough
Dept. of Economic Development
& Agriculture
St Croix, VI 00850
809-778-0991

Mr. Otis Hicks
PO Box 804
Christianstad
St. Croix, VI 00821-0804
809-773-0758

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Room 317-A, Administration Bldg.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

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